08416. c 23.

MATRIMONY.

A LETTER TO YOUNG GENTLEMEN AND LADIES MARRIED OR SINGLE.

MATRIMONY.

A LETTER TO

YOUNG GENTLEMEN AND LADIES

MARRIED OR SINGLE.

Rates, pseud

MATRIMONY.

A LETTER TO

YOUNG GENTLEMEN AND LADIES

MARRIED OR SINGLE.

Τίμιος ὁ γάμος ἐν πᾶσι.
Marriage is honourable in all. APOST.

Felices ter et amplius
Quos irrupta tenet copula: nec malis
Divulsus queremoniis,
Suprema citius solvet amor die. HORAT.

Thrice happy are those, yea, more so,
Whom an unbroken bond hold firmest:
Whose love unhurt by sad complaints
Extends thro' life, to the latest day.

LONDON:
Printed for W. DOMVILLE, at No. 95, Cornhill; and A. FRYER, in South-Audley Street, and Curzon-Street, May-Fair.
M.DCC.LXVIII.

MATRIMONY.

A LETTER TO

YOUNG GENTLEMEN AND LADIES

MARRIED OR SINGLE.

Τίμιος ὁ γάμος ἐν πᾶσι.

Marriage is honourable in all. — Apost.

Felices ter et amplius
Quos irrupta tenet copula: nec malis
Divulsus quaerimonia,
Suprema citius solvet hic. — Horat.

Thrice happy are those lives, more so,
Whom an unbroken bond hold firmest:
Whose love unhurt by sad complaints
Extends thro' life, to the latest day.

LONDON:

Printed for W. Domville, at No. 95, Cornhill; and A. Fryer,
in South-Audley Street, and Curzon-Street, May-Fair.
M.DCC.LXVIII.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IN a day the marriage ſtate is diſcouraged, contemned, and unhappy, an attempt to maintain its reputation, will be ſneered: nevertheleſs the moſt faithful, and kind regard, of one ſex to the other mutually, and the tendereſt care of our ſpecies, in that feeble ſtate we all enter life, is very honourable.

The conſtitutions, health, nouriſhment, protection, and diſcipline, of human beings, will ever be thought highly valuable, by ſuch as have underſtanding; becauſe the happineſs of our exiſtence, the numbers, ſtrength, and proſperity of nations, depend on it.

The wildeſt fools, only, can deſpiſe ſuch things; for a contempt of them is an inſult on Nature itſelf, and the Great Author of it.

However, the moſt natural felicity of the ſexes is ſpoiled, the trueſt good of poſterity deſpiſed, by thoſe who diſregard every good, as well as their own; who are depreciating their very beings, by breaking the ſtrongeſt obligations; and are blotting out themſelves, and their generation, by the blackeſt vices: theſe things, though concealed, unſentenced, and unpuniſhed now, can never eſcape the condemnation of God.

Marriage, as to the external part, ſhould be the kindeſt, ſtrongeſt, and moſt public obligation, to pay that continual important regard, one of each ſex owes to the other, cohabiting together for life: The beſt policy of this ſort ſhould be uſed, to drive away all fears of unfaithfulneſs from one another's breaſts: to prevent too, diſhonourable, and diſreputable ſeparations, which might be cauſed by caprice, paſſion, or events unforeſeen and unavoidable. Nothing ſo grievouſly hurts perſons once united in affection, as parting without regard to the relation they have been in: The fartheſt advances of love to one another, without a ſtrict covenant, is not juſt, much leſs is it friendly, and very far from honourable. Minds, in general, amiable and benevolent, may ſally from their own ſtedfaſtneſs, and without a hold might too eaſily fly off, and unperceived

unperceived by the world quit their engagements, to the great ſorrow of one, if not both. The paſſionate, capricious, and very unſteady, without a ſtrong public bond, would be ſeparated by the mereſt trifles, and the inoffenſive and innocent, moſt likely in diviſions ariſing from every cauſe, would ſuffer moſt in diſcredit, poverty, and diſtreſs, without any relief: In ſuch caſes, you ſee the woman more ſubjected to ſhame, and ſuffering than the man, might be left alone, in ſuch a dark deep of troubles, and diſgrace; as the profligate ſons of men of no honour leave poor unguarded females in, when they have ſeduced them, where the unfeeling world abandon them, paſs by them ſinking, ſport at them, and throw contempt.

The firmeſt ſecurity by contract, is farther needed for the joint care of offspring, that the children may not be neglected by their parents, and other children may not rob them of what they need, and have a right to; and that either of the parents, may not be left alone, in the important concerns for them: in ſuch deſertion the woman who is not void of natural affections, muſt ſink under intolerable weight of care.

To prevent evils of theſe kinds, and even the very fears of them, as far as poſſible, ſuch as are ſincerely deſirous of each other's utmoſt affection, eaſe, and happineſs, ſhould by the beſt form, moſt publicly

publicly contract, to live together, to ſhare one another's fortunes, affections, and enjoyments, till death: this is juſt and kind. And after the beſt ceremonies and articles, moſt kindly formed and reputably ſigned, the fulfilment is all; no engagement, however ſacred, can bind the unfaithful, who violate the ſtrongeſt obligations; and as the licentious and baſe break every tie, and eſcape human notice, and puniſhment, to keep ſacredly this moſt important covenant, is very honourable.

Either of the ſexes who mean well, when, beſides the greateſt ſecurity, the greateſt confidence is needed, will give the firſt, and ſacredly ſeek the laſt. So if there was no demand, generous minds would bind themſelves to honour, and for the love of integrity, and the higheſt happineſs of others, they would act up to it.

If it could be foreknown, any would diſregard that conſtancy, and intire poſſeſſion of one another, neceſſary for the mutual happineſs of each other for life, no ſenſible man, or woman, of modeſty, or goodneſs, would be concerned with ſuch perſon.

Not from cuſtom, therefore, or from the laws of a country, which vary; but by the unalterable common ſenſe of honour, every male and female has confiding in one another in the neareſt relation they are bound. In forming that kind of confidence in one another needful for an happy life, ſincerity is of the utmoſt

conſequence

conſequences on both ſides: they, by each other, are ſuppoſed to mean integrity, and by their pretenſions to faithfulneſs, each is bound to be conſtant to the other: This bond, ever ſo ſecret, cannot be broken without great guilt and baſeneſs of heart.

Yet no private contract, ever ſo ſtrict, can be ſo kind or honourable, becauſe concealed and liable to be broke without any temporal redreſs.

Nothing can be more reaſonable, than that the faithful promoters of mutual felicity, the trueſt companions in virtuous affections, and parents of the human race, ſhould be diſtinguiſhed from the enemies and deſtroyers of it, by ſome public marks of honour.

If there are any that could ſteadily maintain the greateſt faithfulneſs, and two of the beſt hearts had ſufficient confidence in one another, to live together without a formal public bond; as each ſhould offer the greateſt tokens of ſincerity and worthy deſign, for reputation and example ſake; they certainly muſt, if conſiderate, make known their intentions of faithfulneſs, and appear ſtrictly engaged to one another by the beſt and ſtrongeſt obligations: This is marriage.

The moſt public and binding agreement to hold each to the other, or to prevent evils which otherwiſe might hurt parents or children, are not only due to parties aſſociating, but the cognizance of the compact is due to ſociety, who have a right to prevent injuries, to protect individuals, and provide for the good of them, to ſee the beſt ſecurity for a ſucceſſive generation, and for the care to rear and ſupport them.

That is an unnatural body politic which diſregards the members, and the duties they owe one another to compleat itſelf.

Moreover as many characters are needed to furniſh us with the neceſſaries, eſpecially the elegances and ſweets of life, and great care, and pains, and knowledge, are required to train them up, he has a very ſlender claim to any of the good things of life, or honour of men, who will lend no hand to raiſe or form them.

As I have explained marriage, it is a public bond between male and female, to fulfil the moſt righteous and beneficent obligations, to their offspring and one another. The previous regard to offſpring ſhould commence in the choice each perſon makes of the other to be an aſſiſtant for life: This is the reaſon, why I ſhall place a regard to generation firſt, as the principal thing, the different ſexes were deſigned for: That looſe or ſerious cant which

diſregards

diſregards this, or diſcourages matrimony, is from licentiouſneſs, covetouſneſs, or bad policy.

Nothing can more affect offspring than the health and temperature of the ſtock, which are beſt to be found in youth: the perſon that regards poſterity, and would have it ſound and happy, will covenant ſoon, with one moſt apparently healthy and faithful.

The good and generous ſtate of parents conſtitutions, will more affect thoſe which ſhall be born of ſuch, than any after kindneſs to them when in the world: though perſons not exiſting have no claim, and the wild and careleſs are ſo far from thinking of the unborn, they trample on the living: every one would poſſeſs a good conſtitution, and to promote it in thoſe we are the means of bringing into the world, is honourable; this ſhould enforce early, and ſtrict contract between ſuch as are both healthy and virtuous.

Who can number the plagues attending wild and diſſolute procreation; or tell thoſe curſes in ſpecie the children of vitiated parents are heirs to. A ſenſible and good mind would feel too much, upon ſtrict reflection, for the young ones of unnatural wretches.

A heart

A heart not cruelly hardened indeed, muſt ache for the tendereſt creatures of his own race, injured in generation or birth, or abandoned as ſoon as they are born. So plain are grievous diſtempers derived from parents corrupted by a vitious life; ſuch are the calamities of infants neglected, every one who but caſts his eyes on them muſt weep for the babes of the licentious.

Next to birth, is the tendereſt care of a nurſe, a principle which highly promotes the health and ſtrength of the conſtitution of a child. Hard is it, that the folly of youth, and their unnatural conduct, and the faſhionable cuſtoms of fooliſh and wicked parents, ſhould uncondemned curſe the innocent, unborn, and helpleſs infants! Woe be to thoſe of this generation!

The virtuous mother muſt delight to cheriſh her own fleſh; and untainted her milk and care, who keeps the covenant to her huſband, muſt bleſs the offspring of chaſtity, and prevent many grievous infections and evils ſucked in from bad parents and ſtrange nurſes.

Theſe things are true certainly; and if this generation cannot receive them, the children's children of ſuch are above the laws of nature, and their duties will rue for it.

Another thing to be effected beſt by a couple firmly aſſociated in the moſt virtuous deſign, is the regular, ſteadieſt, and generous treatment, of their children, even when babes.

From the very firſt breath of life, it is beſt to treat even infants, invariably with ſuch conduct, as gradually ſhall fit them, for the after advances of life.

The ſtrongeſt and moſt laſting impreſſions, are made very early, which for want of proper care, are often prejudices, very hurtful and laſting.

It is indiſputable the common baſis, for after inſtruction, (the affections and paſſions) take place a great pace; and if ſome true underſtanding is not ſoon laying, the foundation for influence in general afterwards, will be very looſe and uncertain.

Some of the moſt valuable, and ſecureſt principles, are laid at the very bottom, and continued in one, and the ſame method, to ſtrengthen them, ſome time, before others proceed to the work. The nobleſt human advantages are beſt ſecured at firſt, by the moral refinement of parents, and require the greateſt attention, and care.

A variety of characters, and taſtes, cannot be ſo well raiſed up, by any uniform ſyſtem of education.

In every rank there are different particulars, ſuitable to the children there, of great importance, which none are ſo capable of conducting them in, as the people of that rank.

Perſons, of the utmoſt improvement, in their ſtations, are highly qualified to provide characters, to fill like places of life.

Many things will appear ſo important, to be regarded in infancy, and youth, to aſſiſt their conceptions, and underſtanding, for them to proceed well in this world, a good and conſiderate perſon, could not, with any ſatisfaction, tranfer the buſineſs totally to others.

A diſregard to the earlieſt tenderneſs to babes, and the principles of children, from perſons bringing them into life, is cruel, is a breach of the marriage policy, and the honourable conduct due to childhood.

How many by this, are miſerable, ſeemingly ruined: and what muſt be the after-ſtate of thoſe whoſe children muſt riſe up againſt them?

In

In the firſt part of human life, the beſt outlines may be drawn for the fineſt, and moſt perfect characters.

However the beginnings of life, are not formed with much care, like other affairs put out by the lump; though they are treated as trifling, they are worthy the ſkill, of the nobleſt minds, who would have an amiable generation, riſe up and bleſs them.

If ever ſo little regarded, I will add one thing more: no management in the world, can raiſe ſo improved perſons, for the conjugal, or parental life, as the good, united, and ſteady conduct of parents.

There are many very delicate, and beneficial principles, which can only be raiſed, or fixed, by the impreſſions of ſo ſtriking deportments, precepts, and examples, exhibited by a wiſe, and prudent, well affected, and conſtant pair.

No leſs does faithfulneſs benefit the parties, true to one another, man or wife.

From the higheſt to the loweſt degree of human life, the kind of integrity ſhould be the ſame in the marriage ſtate, and a breach

of

of it affect thoſe moſt, who too often think themſelves above the obligations of it, or act as if ſuperior to common laws.

Affluence, may lead the weak and wicked perſons of fortune, to be ignorant and careleſs about the moſt important intereſts, and concerns, as it does: it cannot alter their nature, nor that of human happineſs.

Marriage, with its regulations, is the moſt rational and conſiſtent art to aſſiſt nature in its own courſe, and to perfect its own felicity.

The ſecret rules, of a conjugal life, as well as the external ones, muſt be quite agreable to nature, and ſuch as ſhall always endear the parties, one to the other.

Times, and ſeaſons, cannot be ſuppreſſed, or ſubdued, the natural paſſions and deſires of another, cannot be raiſed, or totally ſunk at will, always.

Every one, without all poſſible prudence, and regulation of themſelves, by ſelf-government, in reference to the condition, diſpoſitions, and felicity of the other, muſt be a very jarring creature, deſtroy all happineſs, injure himſelf, diſtract both lives, and be utterly unfit for ſociety.

The

The man, or woman, is not to have power over his, or, herſelf alone, nor either of them totally, to controul the other at any time.

The utmoſt happineſs can only be had, by ſtudying the moſt agreeable paces to one another, and is beſt kept up by a real love alternately cheriſhed, and a deſire of high eſteem mutually influencing both, as before they came together, by this it is the honour of either to bear rule, the one ſhould retain her charms, and the other merit the enjoyment of them, as in the day of marriage.

Chaſte, and ſeaſonable reſerves, made agreeable, by continual engaging ſweetneſs of temper, can only raiſe the enjoyments of a married life, to the higheſt pitch.

Thoſe who deſpiſe the moſt benevolent rules, neceſſary to prevent the greateſt evils of life, and treat them with practical contempt, are akin to thoſe murderers, who ſecretly can act characters, deſtructive to thoſe they ſhould cheriſh.

If this truth could be forced to the ſour, froward, unfriendly, and guilty mind, how much a life of integrity, kindneſs, and mutual affection, promotes the health of both conſtitutions,

male and female, the perſons who have viciouſly plagued themſelves, and others, muſt be ſtung through, and would gnaſh their teeth, gainſt themſelves.

This is a great truth, and comes from an apoſtle, he that is conſtant and kind to a faithful perſon, with whom he is married, which will beſt ſecure her affections, he highly regards himſelf.

She too who is always very affectionate, and true, to a ſincerely benevolent huſband, loveth herſelf.

The greateſt confidence and attachment to each other, may be highly improved, by ſteadfaſtneſs to a kind covenant, this alone can perfect the felicity of male and female, the joys of the happieſt pair, may be vaſtly raiſed by encreaſed love, and truſt in one another, they are beſt excited in the marriage relation; the ſtrongeſt deſires in rational beings to one another are heightened by reaſon, and faithfulneſs.

There is nothing, can argue more weakneſs, and wickedneſs, than human beings acting, ſo totally without reaſon, as to ſeize gratification, ſo as to deſtroy as far as poſſible both it, and themſelves,

many

many have by this very error, deprived both themſelves and the innocent, of the felicity of nature, theſe have never known what it was, nor ever can, nor become huſbands or parents.

Marriage is honourable in all.

Trying every art, to kindle a warm affection, and excite confidence, where there is no deſign of conſtancy, or ſhould be none, is ſuch an ungenerous, and cruel behaviour, a mind of any goodneſs muſt deteſt it.

Such a breach of honour as makes a confident to deceive the ſame, or beguiles a perſon in a concern, which ſo ſadly affects another, as may never be overcome, diſgraces all their notions of honour, who can laugh it off, for gallantry.

Murder is a horrid crime, perſons will ſtart, with terror at the thoughts of it, who like fools in intrigues, will perpetrate worſe things, with a jeſt.

How many are there, and of the moſt virtuous too, for ſuch are injured moſt by the falſe, how many ſuch have loſt the peace, and happineſs of their whole lives, languiſhed away, and died

moſt

wretchedly, for the very vile perſon who has deceived them, to the great diſtreſs of their friends.

The firſt and pureſt affections, are ſo far the ſtrongeſt, many bear always the kindeſt regard inviolably, to the falſe perſon, that obtained them: And though another moſt deſerving marries the forſaken, there is ſcarcely ever true eſteem for that perſon though a moſt faithful relation.

One baſe mind, by fraud in affection, may deſtroy in many, the natural foundation, for the greateſt conjugal felicity, and commit ſuch errors, as no one in the world, can expreſs, none can correct, or make ſatisfaction for.

That extravagance ſome of the fair ſex encourage, and is therefore uſed, by their betrayers, will add grievouſly to the diſappointment, ſuch ſilly ones meet with, who reliſh nothing but high romance, and rely on the flattering tribes, ſtudying, to tempt even the innocent to paths of trouble, and ſhame, whoſe very ſelves, judgment, and promiſes, are any thing, to deceive them.

But language cannot ſet forth, the inward confuſion, and diſtreſs of a good and ſenſible mind, tempted, deluded, and diſhonourably

nourably treated; nor the baſeneſs of the guilty eſpecially thoſe falſe friends of the fair ſex, who pretend to adore them, with deſigns to betray them.

POSTSCRIPT.

Admirers of the fair ſex, amidſt the variety of fine and elegant appearances, this world is enriched with, by the author of nature, a beautiful woman moſt of all you extol.

All fleſh is as graſs, and ſhe is the glory thereof, the flower of the field.

This nation if elegantly cultivated, ſhould not be treated as a common, it ſhocks the vulgar ſenſe of the meaneſt perſon, that the effect of care, a beautiful production, improved in a garden, which has long been the concern, though not the property of thoſe who cheriſhed it, ſhould be ſmothered, with weeds, or torn up by the rudeſt hands, at once to be blaſted, and wither away.

If you may ſee the richeſt flowers, not your own, nor to be purchaſed by any conſideration, or not without proper conſent,

that perſon who would hurt them, much more ſecretly crop them, and carry them off, to the deſtructive abuſe of thoſe beauties, is very intolerable, mean, rude, and diſhoneſt.

O ye faireſt of the daughters of men, truſt not yourſelves, without great diſcretion. For who can preſerve you, if (flattered) you incline to the deſtroyer.

If you will admit the diſhonourable, who would pluck up a beauty, though they in an inſtant expoſe it to ruin, and caſt it away, do not complain of your fate. Your reſpect to the diſſolute, is an inſult, on the whole of your ſex.

That perſon honours badneſs of character, whoſe perſon is amiable, and tempts to the ſtrongeſt deſire of her eſteem, by real charms, who confers her greateſt regard, to a baſe man, her ſufferings ſhould prevent others doing ſo, to atone for the injury, done the public.

For in all ages, and nations ſome of the greateſt expences, fatigues, and danger of death itſelf, men have ruſhed through cheerfully,

fully, for a woman's regard: That if amiable characters, could be highly preferred, by females men muſt act them.

To conclude, let ſuch as regard no laws, who have no honour, whoſe lives are ſhameful, vile and cruel, eſcaping juſtice, and judgement, take care they are not deceived, till on a ſudden, the day of perdition, ſeize them.

For great grievances, where redreſs cannot be had on earth, nor the criminal ever ſo bad, cannot be puniſhed, there is a higher court, of the moſt perfect intelligence, where theſe things, are cited: there every delinquent, undiſguiſed, muſt make an appearance.

Thoſe lurking offences, daring divine juſtice, which produce many horrid ſcenes of hidden diſtreſs, and grief, earthly friends muſt not know of, will ſoon be thoroughly expoſed.

All the concealed treatment, of ungenerous minds, the moſt ſly ill-natured carriage of a deceitful unfeeling heart, none now have a right to pry into, is not hid from the diſcernment of the all-ſeeing eye, and muſt be puniſhed.

Thoſe

Thoſe baſe ones who cauſe many perſons, both innocent and good, to pine away their lives, languiſh and die in ſecret, under croſsneſs, frowns and monſtrous treatment, will ſhortly meet with confuſion and ſhame.

However ſmothered now, the acts of an ungenerous diſhonourable life are, they muſt at laſt ſting the guilty.

Remember, male, or female, under covenant, or not, every moſt ſecret offender, againſt the laws of nature, and human happineſs, GOD WILL JUDGE.

Your's, &c.

RATIO.

LONDON, *October* 7, 1768.

FINIS.